

Brighton & Hove City Council

Overview & Scrutiny

Agenda Item 7

Subject: Meeting the needs of Special Educational Needs and Disability learners

Date of meeting: 8 July 2025

Report of: Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Youth Services

Contact Officer: Name: Corporate Director for Families, Children and Wellbeing

Email: deb.austin@brighton-hove.gov.uk

Ward(s) affected: (All Wards);

Key Decision: No

For general release

1. Purpose of the report and policy context

- 1.1 This report, and detailed slide deck, sets out the current position both nationally and locally for Special Educational Need and Disability (SEND) learners. It explains the current prevalence of need and how this is being met. It sets out our intentions for the development of future provision.
- 1.2 This report links specifically to the Council Plan 2023-2027, Outcome 2 for a fair and inclusive city and 3, a healthy city where people thrive. It also supports 2 of the 5 pillars working towards becoming a learning organisation, of 'being diverse and inclusive' and 'innovative and creative'.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 Overview & Scrutiny notes the report and the detailed information in Appendix 1.

3. Context and background information

- 3.1 More children and young people than ever before are being identified as having SEND. Across the country, there is a steep increase in the use of specialist provision. Significant education funding is invested in the SEND system but the overall life outcomes for young adults with SEND are not improving.
- 3.2 24% of children and young people in Brighton & Hove have SEND. 18% receive SEND support and almost 6% have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP). The biggest growth in need is for autism and social, emotional and mental health needs. (see Appendix 1 for details)

- 3.3 Brighton & Hove has 'outstanding' special school provision, and the Pupil Referral Unit is judged 'good' by OfSTED. All the resource base and specialist provision in the city is set out in Appendix 1.
- 3.4 Brighton & Hove has continued to develop and improve the SEND provision in the city in line with the SEND Strategy 2021-2026. All developments are set out in Appendix 1.
- 3.5 Further developments are planned over the next 3 years. The immediate plans are set out in Appendix 1.

4. Community engagement and consultation

- 4.1 All developments in SEND are co-produced with stakeholders in the system using a workstream approach. Representatives of the city Parent and Carer Council (PaCC) are involved in the workstreams and there are regular communication meetings with the wider parent body. Specialist SEND staff and Headteachers are involved in, and support the thinking and development of, resourced and specialist provision in the city.

5. Financial implications

- 5.1 The funding for SEN provision is largely provided via the High Needs Block of the Dedicated Schools Grant. The High Needs Block funding in 2025/26 totals £41.5m. At the end of the 2024/25 financial year, the council overspent its High Needs block allocation by £1.1m. This is carried forward and is accounted for within an unusable reserve.
- 5.2 Other areas of SEND related funding include the SEN Statutory Services team, Education Psychology Service and Home to School Transport. These are general fund budgets amounting to approximately £11m.

Name of finance officer consulted: Steve Williams

Date consulted:(24/06/2025):

6. Legal implications

- 6.1 There are no specific legal implications arising from this report. Tailored legal advice will be provided in relation to particular issues or proposals identified in this report as and when required.

Name of lawyer consulted: Serena Kynaston Date consulted:
(24/06/2025)

7. Equalities implications

- 7.1 All SEND provision developments are subject to equalities impact assessment.

8. Sustainability implications

- 8.1 There are no negative implications of having local SEND provision. Children and young people have a sense of belonging to their local community and the travel to access support is much shorter. As we develop more provision we are anticipating that fewer children will need to travel to out of city placements. This will mean shorter travelling times.

9. Health and Wellbeing Implications:

- 9.1 Belonging to a community enhances young peoples mental health. Our desire is for more children to be educated near to family and friends even if a specialist placement is required.

Other Implications

10. Procurement implications

- 10.1 Any new or expanded provision is subject to a robust and transparent internal process where relevant stakeholders are informed and invited to express an interest in providing additional places at their setting.

11. Conclusion

- 11.1 This report is to inform the People Overview and Scrutiny Committee about the current position on the SEND system both nationally and locally. The committee is asked to note the developments and intentions to SEND provision in the city.

Supporting Documentation

1. Appendices

1. Meeting the needs of SEND learners presentation

